

## **WCCC's President, Professor Get First-Hand Taste of Marines**

WASHINGTON TWP. (March 29, 2013) - With the launch late last year of the VIPER program at Warren County Community College and its early success, it seemed only natural that somebody at WCCC get a first-hand feel of how the military can benefit from the college's newest initiative which is intended to give military folks a chance to parlay their military experience into a college degree. So when the school learned of a special program offered by the Marines that gives educators the chance to experience what a recruit goes through, Professor Dr. Robert Sintich, VIPER's creator, wanted to give it a go. And he was able to "recruit" another college official to join him for the week of training at Parris Island in South Carolina - Dr. Will Austin, President of the school.

"I have a great deal more respect as to what these recruits go through," said Dr. Austin. "They are being trained to be intelligent warriors. They are being very well educated."

For nearly a full week, Dr. Austin, Dr. Sintich, and about 75 other educators from throughout the Northeast, got a taste of what the recruits go through and also an overview of the Marines and its goals. Days began at 5 a.m. and went into the early evening. While they did not go through the full Marine training experience, they did get simulations of just about every aspect of the routine.

"We got to participate in a lot of activities; we ate like Marines, we marched around with them, we were treated like recruits," said Dr. Austin.

For the Marines, the main goal of the program is educate the educators.

"We are aware that there is a bit of a disconnect between the military and the education system, and this program's goal is to connect the two because their missions are very similar in nature," said Sgt Samuel A. Nasso, Marketing and Public Affairs Section Chief for the Marine Corps Recruiting Station in New Jersey.

Sgt. Nasso continued, "Educators are enormous influences on young men and women's lives and it's imperative they are aware of all opportunities available for them. One of the Marine Corps philosophies is the concept of continual professional growth. Since day one a Marine is in training to the day the Marine retires the goal is to strive to be a better Marine and a better individual in all facets of live. We want the educators to see the benefits of what becoming a Marine really entails so if a young man or woman approaches them they can speak on the matter knowledgably."

"I was very impressed with the whole program," said Dr. Austin. "The drill instructors we dealt with were very professional, very honest. I have a great deal more respect for what they do. We got a great understanding of how a Marine thinks and the new high tech training standards that they go through. It was very in-depth."

The trip to Parris Island was also an opportunity for Dr. Austin and Dr. Sintich to speak to the Marines about the VIPER program (Veterans In Pursuit of Educational Readiness). The

program, launched in conjunction with Thomas Edison State College, allows veterans to translate military training into college credits.

"These men and women are being trained in many essential skills that truly are educationally-based," said Dr. Sintich, whose son is a Marine. "By experiencing the Marine program first-hand it helps us to get a better understanding of the whole picture - and lets the Marines understand our program better, too."

Through VIPER, veterans are eligible to receive up to 34 credits for their military training plus up to 11 credits for courses directly related to one of six programs of study: Automotive Technology, Business, Computer Science, Criminal Justice, Fire Science, and Food and Beverage Management. This means they may be able to graduate with an Associate's Degree in as little as one semester and then, if they so choose, seamlessly transfer to Thomas Edison to complete a Bachelor's program.

All VIPER participants are also eligible for in-county rates regardless of location, and with a plethora of on-line course options, this means active military can earn their degree while stationed in many places worldwide.

For more information about the VIPER program, contact Dr. Sintich at 908-835-9222. To learn more about WCCC, visit [www.warren.edu](http://www.warren.edu).